

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 139670

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM VIENTIANE DATED MAY 31, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BANGKOK, PARIS, ROME, GENEVA,
USUN NEW YORK, HONG KONG IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, LA, US

SUBJECT: PL-480 FOOD ASSISTANCE TO LAOS

REF: STATE 136989

1. AS INSTRUCTED, THE CHARGE DELIVERED THE AMENDED NOTE
ON OUR 10,000 TON LAO FOOD AID CONTRIBUTION TO THE LAO
FOREIGN MINISTRY AT 1600 LOCAL TIME MAY 31. SOMBAT
CHOUNLAMANY, DIRECTOR OF THE DEVELOPED NATIONS DEPARTMENT,
WAS THE RECIPIENT, SINCE UNDER SECRETARY SOUBANH SITHILATH
WAS TIED UP WITH THE VISITING THAI FOREIGN MINISTER.
(SOUBANH HAD BEEN THE OFFICIAL WHO HAD HANDED US THE LAO
REQUEST LAST JANUARY.)

2. SOMBAT WAS TOLD THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER
ADDITIONAL FOOD AID PROVIDED WE KNEW THAT THIS INITIAL
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INCREMENT HAD BEEN CONSUMED BY NEEDY PEOPLE AND PROVIDED
THERE WAS STILL A NEED. THE CHARGE STRESSED THAT
OFFICIALS OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE
ABLE TO MONITOR AND INSPECT THE DISTRIBUTION AND
CONSUMPTION OF OUR AID. SOMBAT WAS TOLD THAT THIS
WAS A PERFECTLY NORMAL, PROPER REQUIREMENT.

3. THE CHARGE SAID THAT IN CONSIDERING FURTHER AID, THE U.S. WOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE STATE OF U. S.-LAO RELATIONS. WE WOULD BE MINDFUL OF HOW GOOD OR HOW BAD THEY WERE. SOMBAT INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY AND THOUGHT THIS ALSO WAS A NORMAL, PROPER CONSIDERATION. (THERE WAS NO MENTION OF MIA'S OR OF LAO ATTACKS ON THE U.S.)

4. SOMBAT THANKED THE CHARGE FOR HIS INFORMATION AND THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION. HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THIS MOVE REPRESENTED "A STEP FORWARD IN MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS."

5. FOR BANGKOK: WITH REGARD TO THE PROBLEM OF BRINGING RICE TO AND THROUGH THAILAND, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INDIA IS SENDING 1,000 TONS OF INDIAN RICE TO LAOS THROUGH THAILAND. ACCORDING TO THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR HERE, IT IS BEING SENT BY SHIP FROM CALCUTTA TO BANGKOK AND BY ETO TRUCKS FROM BANGKOK TO NONG KHAI.

6. COMMENT: SOMBAT'S POSITION WITH RESPECT TO MONITORING IS ENCOURAGING. NEVERTHELESS, OTHER MINISTRIES AND LAO GOVERNMENT ENTITIES ARE INVOLVED, AND WE ARE BY NO MEANS HOME FREE ON THE ISSUE OF END USE AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS. ROBERTS UNQUOTE VANCE

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